Request for Qualifications: Evaluating the impact of a programme of the Republic of Rwanda’s Ministry of Education (MINEDUC)

RFQ.PW3.07.RW.PG

Issue date: 11 May 2015
Deadline: 23:59 GMT, 15 June 2015

1. Introduction

The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) requests research organisations or consortia to submit qualifications for a proposal preparation grant under 3ie’s Policy Window 3. The prepared proposal will be for a high-quality impact evaluation of a programme of the Republic of Rwanda’s Ministry of Education (MINEDUC).

2. Overview of 3ie’s Policy Window 3

3ie’s Policy Window 3 (PW3) funds high-quality, mixed-method impact evaluations commissioned by policymakers and programme managers to answer questions about the attributable impact of interventions they implement. 3ie promotes theory-based impact evaluations and requires impact evaluation research teams to use experimental or quasi-experimental approaches to identify counterfactuals. Rigorous mixed methods help examine the full causal chain of the programme and answer questions about what works, why, how and at what cost. 3ie also encourages cost-efficiency analyses in impact evaluations it supports. These are laid out in 3ie’s principles of impact evaluation.

Grants under this window will be awarded in two phases.

2.1 Phase one: qualifications and proposal preparation

The first phase begins with this Request for Qualifications (RFQ). If chosen, the selected team must engage collaboratively with MINEDUC staff and other relevant stakeholders to put together impact evaluation proposal for rigorous impact evaluation design of the selected programme (see also section 3 below for more information about possible programmes) being tested and implemented by MINEDUC.

Please see the 3ie policy window preparation grant (PWPG) agreement and grant administration templates for more details on organisational requirements.
The preparation grant covers costs associated with proposal preparation activities, including costs of engaging with MINEDUC staff as well as with 3ie. This includes travel to Rwanda in order to conduct at least one stakeholder engagement and education workshops with relevant staff for promoting increased understanding of impact evaluations, as well as identifying questions for the impact evaluation. These workshops are expected to promote MINEDUC involvement in developing the evaluation design and the implementation of the evaluation design. Through this process, the team ensures that MINEDUC staff understand impact evaluations, why they are important, what is required to undertake them and how to use the evidence they produce. This is discussed further in Section 4.2. Preparation activities also include initial visits to potential study site locations to engage with field staff and potential beneficiaries, without placing undue burden on either.

At the end of this period, the selected team will submit the proposal, including proposed budget, using the 3ie PW evaluation proposal form. The proposed design is due within three months of the signing of the proposal preparation grant agreement. More details are provided below, including on budgets.

2.2. Phase two: full proposal and impact evaluation

At the end of Phase I, teams will submit full impact evaluation design and budget to 3ie. The proposed impact evaluation design and budget will be reviewed and scored by at least two internal and three external reviewers, including a representative from MINEDUC. It is 3ie’s intent, although not guarantee, to fund one proposed evaluation, conditional on the proposal receiving adequate scores on all selection criteria (see section 4.5 for selection criteria). 3ie may provide comments and request a resubmission of a proposal that does not receive adequate scores. 3ie may also suggest additional research and expertise in the team if the proposal is selected for further financial support. 3ie reserves the right not to award any follow-on impact evaluation grant.

If the proposal is accepted, 3ie will award the impact evaluation team a grant to conduct the impact evaluation under 3ie’s standard terms and conditions. Please see the 3ie grant agreement and grant administration agreement templates for more details.

3. Background

3.1 Implementing agency

Prior to 1994, education in Rwanda was reserved for the privileged few, but over the last 17 years access to education has increased tremendously. Today a child born in Rwanda is guaranteed a minimum of nine years of basic education that consists of six years at primary and three years at secondary school. According to the MINEDUC, the number of students at primary level has more than doubled. There are almost nine times more students in secondary school and 17 times more students in higher education.
MINEDUC has identified several key priorities for the country. Some of these include examining the effectiveness and sustainability of the following interventions:

1. Parent teacher associations and committees in education
2. Modular system of higher education
3. School feeding programme at primary and secondary levels of schools
4. Implementation of the 12-year basic education
5. Costs of public and private education, including for Technical Vocation Education and Training (TVET)
6. The impact of a new higher education financing policy on enrolment and quality of high education
7. Incentives (pay for performance) in basic education, TVET and at MINEDUC central
8. Social and economic factors influencing drop-out and transition rates
9. Recruitment and employment policy: Analysis of skills gaps and graduates recruitment
10. The internal efficiency of the education sector of Rwanda

3.2 Commissioning agency

The University of Rwanda, College of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Public Health (UR-CMHS-SPH) is the commissioning agency that will support this impact evaluation, along with MINEDUC. This means that 3ie’s memorandum of understanding is with UR-CMHS-SPH for this grant. For this impact evaluation, UR-CMHS-SPH will play the role of a key stakeholder, alongside MINEDUC. The School of Public Health has been closely working with the government to produce research evidence to generate necessary knowledge to guide policy design and the implementation process.

4. Policy Window Preparation Grant (Phase one)

4.1 Eligibility

1. Only legally registered organisations and consortia of registered organisations, not individuals, may apply.
2. The lead grant-holding organisation may be located anywhere in the world.
3. The research team should however include at least one researcher that is a Rwandan national as a principal investigator(s) (PI). The national researcher must be resident in Rwanda and working for an organisation that is registered there. They must be engaged in substantive tasks for the study during design, analysis, writing, policy engagement and research communication for uptake in policy and practice.
4. The research team may include other researchers who are not employees of the grant-holding organisation.
5. Each proposal must be submitted by a single organisation that may include others as sub-grantees or sub-contractors (subject to 3ie’s direct and indirect cost policies).
6. For-profit organisations are eligible to apply, but are restricted to the same indirect cost limits as non-profit organisations and may not charge a fee.
7. The applicant organisation must be able to sign the 3ie grant agreement, which is available on the 3ie website.
8. The submitted full impact evaluation proposal must be relevant to the programmatic needs and priorities of MINEDUC. Establishing this relevance is a key goal of the preparation phase.

4.2 Preparation process and expectations

At the beginning of the preparation phase, the research team, the implementation agency, and 3ie will engage in one or more introductory calls to clarify expectations for the preparation proposal phase and for the deliverables that will close the phase: a full impact evaluation proposal, including budget and a policy engagement plan.

During the proposal preparation phase, national and international members of impact evaluation teams must undertake country and site visits. These visits, through engagement with the MINEDUC and other stakeholders, will allow teams to develop a methodology for the impact evaluation that is both technically rigorous and relevant to MINEDUC’s needs.

They must demonstrate their ability to conduct the evaluation study for which they win an award, including their availability to start and finish the study within the timeframe indicated in this RFQ.

The impact evaluation team must hold at least one workshop, especially focusing on stakeholders within the implementing agency. The stakeholder workshop(s) and discussions with the MINEDUC staff should cover the following areas:

- Identify impact evaluable programmes from priority areas;
- Identify gaps in on-going programmes;
- Introduce the concept and requirements of impact evaluation, explain the rationale for impact evaluation, what can be learned from it and the implications for programme design, data collection, analysis and use of results;
- Identify programme components that may be evaluated and lend themselves to an impact evaluation;
- Understand and develop the theory of change for the identified programme that has been identified for the impact evaluation;
- Determine evaluation questions and timeframes for evaluation;
- Discuss a feasible evaluation design and plan, that includes identification methods including discussing its roll out to the extent relevant;
- Discuss study sites, data collection methods and possible implications for sampling;
- Discuss existing monitoring systems and how those data could be used in the impact evaluation; and
- Carry out scoping and other background information needed to develop a policy engagement and research uptake communication plan, using 3ie guidance and templates. These will be shared with the grantee once provisional award is made.

The process described above will ensure that the research questions and the study design are arrived at jointly by the MINEDUC and the impact evaluation team. This will be crucial in establishing buy-in from MINEDUC and other key stakeholders, securing their cooperation in the evaluation and increasing the chances that the findings will be taken up.
4.3 Budget for the preparation grant and full impact evaluation

3ie will make one preparation grant of up to US$20,000 to a research team qualifying to prepare a proposal in Rwanda. The grant will cover costs associated with the necessary activities for producing the full impact evaluation proposal. Eligible activities include those described above, such as a short and relevant literature review, formative research, researcher time and travel to meet with MINEDUC, implementing partners and survey firms, stakeholder design and engagement workshops, preliminary checking of relevant administrative data and site visits.

The preparation grant will be paid in two tranches. The first tranche will be 60 per cent of approved budget, paid on contract signing. The second tranche will be 40 per cent of approved budget, which will be paid after the full impact evaluation proposal is submitted and accepted.

3ie’s budget for a full impact evaluation is a maximum of US$ 500,000 although 3ie will do complete financial due diligence and a value for money assessment for this. The team may submit a higher budget where the remaining amount is financed by other sources (which must be available by the start of implementation. The team may propose a budget below US$ 500,000. 3ie reserves the right to ask the team to revise the budget.

4.4 Timeline

The following table includes an indicative list of deliverables and deadlines for both the preparatory phase (phase 1) and the full impact evaluation proposal phase (phase 2).

Table 1: timeline for RFQ submission and review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RFQ and selection</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11 May 2015</td>
<td>3ie posts the RFQ</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22 May 2015</td>
<td>Potential applicants submit any queries regarding the PW preparation grant to 3ie at <a href="mailto:pw3@3ieimpact.org">pw3@3ieimpact.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26 May 2015</td>
<td>3ie posts responses to emailed queries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 June 2015</td>
<td>Applicants submit complete qualification packets to <a href="mailto:pw3@3ieimpact.org">pw3@3ieimpact.org</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 July 2015</td>
<td>3ie announces provisional award of grants</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation phase, post 3 July</td>
<td>Identified team works closely with MINEDUC to finalise dates for field visit; 3ie undertake two phone calls with the research team (and MINEDUC) to communicate key requirements, deliverables.</td>
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4.5 Selection criteria

The qualifications submitted in response to the RFQ will be reviewed and scored according to the following criteria:

**Table 2: Scoring considerations for preparation and full impact evaluation grants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications for proposal preparation: Phase one</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research credentials of PIs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed from covering letter, CVs and sample publications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan for meaningful and substantive involvement of local and regional researchers</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed from covering letter and Qualification and Eligibility form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational capabilities to hold and manage grants.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed from covering letter Organisation Information form, Qualifications and Eligibility form including ability to hold and manage similar grants in the past.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sector and country experience of the research team.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed from covering letter, Qualifications and Eligibility form, sample publications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate membership with 3ie</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessed from Organisation Information form</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Application for full impact evaluation: Phase two**

| Qualification of the impact evaluation team including previous impact evaluation experience and sector experience | 20 |
| Quality of technical proposal, internal and external validity | 45 |
| Demonstrated relevance of research question to the needs of the implementing agency and potential for uptake of study findings | 25 |
| Value for money | 10 |

4.6 Qualification review process

Qualifications will be reviewed and scored by at least one internal 3ie reviewer, two external reviewers, and one representative from MINEDUC.
5. Instructions for applicants

RFQ applications must include the following information:

1. Covering letter. Please indicate in your covering letter the country for which you are applying and highlight relevant experiences in impact evaluations, including in Rwanda and relevant aspects of education. The cover letter can also highlight relevant experience and work in the area of research uptake.

2. Completed organisation information form available on the 3ie website.

3. Completed eligibility and qualifications form available on the 3ie website.

4. Curriculum vitae (CV, not to exceed three pages each) of all proposed PIs, along with a signed letter from each indicating the share of working time expected to be spent on the proposal preparation work and confirming availability for that expected share of working time. 3ie expects these PIs to participate in the proposed impact evaluation. Applicants are required to provide only information relevant to the grant in their CV.

5. If applicable, include CVs (not to exceed three pages each) of additional researchers who will be involved in conducting the impact evaluation, if approved. Applicants need to provide only information relevant to the grant in their CV.

6. Copies of up to three impact evaluation reports or publications relevant for this call, with proposed PIs as named authors. Applicants should only send relevant impact evaluation reports in which authors have worked on impact evaluations.

7. Proposed budget, not to exceed US$20,000, for the proposal preparation costs. The proposed budget must follow 3ie’s direct cost and indirect cost policies, including the cost of travel to programme sites and engaging in workshops.

6. Submission guidelines

- Please submit all files in a single email message not to exceed 10MB to pw3@3ieimpact.org no later than 23:59 GMT, 15 June 2015

- Components three and four, above, should be submitted in a single Microsoft Word or .rtf file in font size equal to or larger than 11 point.

- The signed letters from the PIs and sample impact evaluation studies relevant to the grant may be submitted as separate pdf files.

- The budget should be presented in 3ie budget format and follow 3ie budget guidelines. Budget notes may be submitted as a separate Microsoft© Word or .rtf file in font size equal to or larger than 11 point.
Incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Please direct any questions related to this RFQ to pw3@3ieimpact.org by 23:59 GMT, 22 May 2015. A single document with all questions and answers will be made publicly available on the 3ie website on 26 May 2015.

This RFQ does not constitute a guarantee of an award.